







# **THE DANCE OF DEATH**

By the same Author



THE ORATORS  
POEMS  
LOOK, STRANGER!  
ANOTHER TIME  
NEW YEAR LETTER  
FOR THE TIME BEING

W.H.  
AUDEN

•  
THE  
DANCE  
OF  
DEATH



FABER &  
FABER

FIRST PUBLISHED IN NOVEMBER MCMXXXIII  
BY FABER AND FABER LIMITED  
24 RUSSELL SQUARE LONDON W.C.1  
REPRINTED SEPTEMBER MCMXXXV  
NOVEMBER MCMXLII, AND DECEMBER MCMXLV  
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
R. MACLEHOSE AND COMPANY LIMITED  
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS GLASGOW  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

To  
**ROBERT MEDLEY**  
and  
**RUPERT DOONE**



# THE DANCE OF DEATH

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*Announcer.* We present to you this evening a picture of the decline of a class, of how its members dream of a new life, but secretly desire the old, for there is death inside them. We show you that death as a dancer.

*Chorus (behind curtain).* 'Our Death.'

[The italic letters indicate performers on the stage, the Greek letters performers in the auditorium.]

[**STAGING NOTE.** The stage is bare with a simple backcloth, in front of which are the steps on which the ANNOUNCER sits, like the umpire at a tennis tournament. Down stage is a small jazz orchestra. In front of the conductor a microphone. When **box** and **cox** are to speak the conductor sits down and they take his place.]

SCENE :

[*Chorus in silk dressing gowns. Their clothes on the ground. As they sing they take off their dressing gowns revealing handsome two-piece bathing suits. They dance and lie on the stage in various patterns. A Medicine Ball.*] ]

Gents from Norway  
Ladies from Sweden  
Don't stand in the doorway  
Come, this is what you've been needing.  
Boys from France  
Join in our dance;  
Italian belles, valiant belles  
And anyone else  
With profs. from Germany  
All sing in harmony  
Come out into the sun.

Strip off your shirt  
Kick off your shoes  
It won't hurt  
To leave behind those office blues  
Here on the beach  
You're out of reach  
Of sad news, bad news  
You can refuse  
The invitation .  
To self-examination  
Come out into the sun.

Are you too fat  
And getting bigger  
He'll see to that  
He'll give you a grecian figure  
Exercises  
As the sun rises  
Shall strengthen you, lengthen you  
Build you anew.  
When day is ended  
You shall feel splendid;  
Come out into the sun.

Lie down on the sand  
Feel the sun on your flesh;  
It's so grand;  
O Boy, you'll soon want to get fresh.  
Living with nature  
Is the life of the future  
The new life, the true life  
The life for you.  
Europe's in a hole  
Millions on the dole  
But come out into the sun.

We shall build to-morrow  
A new clean town  
With no more sorrow  
Where lovely people walk up and down.  
We shall all be strong  
We shall all be young  
No more tearful days, fearful days  
Or unhappy affairs  
We shall all pull our weight

In the ship of state  
Come out into the sun.

- A.* Can you turn a cartwheel yet?
- B.* I've often been taught but I always forget.
- A.* I can. Shall I show you?
- B.* Please. [Bus.]  
How wonderful. You do it with such ease.
- C.* Heavens I've left my oil behind.
- D.* Madam, use mine.
- C.* You're very kind.

*Announcer.* Get ready, your instructor comes  
Stand up at ease, and beat the drums.

*[A human arch is formed. Dancer enters through audience.]*

- A.* He's marvellous  
He's Greek  
When I see him  
My legs go weak.
- B.* Lend me your comb  
To do my hair  
I must look my best  
When he is here.
- C.* He walks with such grace  
Just like a cat  
Where's my kodak  
I must snap him like that.
- a.* 'E's a bit of orlright, ain't 'e Bill?

*[Chorus form up with dumb-bells for exercises. Dancer has a drum of these.]*

Vital young man  
Do what you can  
For our dust  
We who are weak  
Want a splendid physique  
You must, you must.  
Do not forsake us, make us, give us your word  
As strong as a horse as quick as a bird.  
You're our ideal  
Make it come real  
For us.  
Vital young man  
Do what you can  
You must.

[*Bus.*]

*Announcer.* Ladies and gentlemen, the sea  
Waits for you, tall upon the shore  
So fill your lungs and take a plunge  
Choose your partners and delay no more.

[*Select partners for old-time Waltz.*]

You were a great Cunarder, I  
Was only a fishing smack  
Once you passed across my bows  
And of course you did not look back  
It was only a single moment yet  
I watch the sea and sigh  
Because my heart can never forget  
The day you passed me by.                   [*Exeunt Chorus.*]

*[Dance. Solo dance as Sun God, creator and destroyer. At the end of the dance he picks up the clothes of the chorus, puts them in a clothes basket and shoves the basket into wings.]*

*Announcer.* Do not be mistaken for a moment about this stranger,

The lives of many here are already in danger.

He looks on the just and the unjust as he has always done.

Some of you think he loves you. He is leading you on.

He dances, and of course the barley and the trees grow tall,

His help is powerful but does not apply to you all.

The bones of the beggared listen from underground:

To them his dancing has long been a familiar sound.

For he has an evil eye as well as a good.

He's certainly able to bewitch with it those whom he would.

He's fond of flowers, and doves will fly to his hand.

Yes, but what is he doing here to-day in our land ?

The young people turn to him now in their green desire

Perhaps they imagine he'll set their hearts on fire.

Will touch them alive as he touches the barley seed—

Perhaps they'll find they've been very mistaken indeed.

[*Re-enter Bathers—stiff and mechanical from cold.*]

A. I feel so cold.

B. I'm getting old.

C. I don't really hold  
With this lying about  
In the sun without  
A stitch or a clout.

D. I've got a pain.

E. The sun's gone in.

*F.* It's going to rain.

*G.* I've got a hunch  
I want my lunch.

*α.* You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Maudie, appearing in public like that. Where do you think you are? The Garden of Eden? If father were to see you, e'd give you a good 'iding.

*A.* Come on, let's dress.

*B.* Why, where's our clothing?

*C.* They're gone—there's nothing!

*D.* Stolen, I guess.

*E.* We're in a mess.

*α.* [Excitedly] 'E took 'em—I saw 'im

[Dancer bangs his drum to drown her.]

[Still louder] No, Mr. Noisy, you can't stop me. You took 'em—you know it, and put 'em in that basket. Didn't 'e, 'Arry, own up?

*β.* What did you say, ma?

*α.* 'E took 'em.

*β.* Took what, ma?

*α.* The clothes.

*β.* What clothes, ma?

*α.* Why, their clothes.

*β.* Did 'e really, co&. [Laughs]

*Chorus (excitedly).* If this is true  
It's mean of you.  
Is this a game?  
We think it's a shame.

Is it a stunt?  
Give them back at once.  
Please don't be silly.  
We're getting chilly.

*Announcer.* Calm, please, calm. Now as you accuse him  
He will call the manager, excuse him.

[*Exit and enter with Manager.*]

*Manager.* Vy make so a trobble in my theatre  
Explain yourself quick. Vot is de matter?

*Chorus.* This lady declares, he has put our clothes in a basket.  
Let us see for ourselves. Bring it, we ask it.

α. That's right, 'e did.

[*Dancer makes a nose at α.*]

Harry, did you see what 'e did? Are you going to let  
your mother be insulted? Go and 'it 'im.

*Manager.* Please, lady, please  
Not so loud, please  
I fetch dis basket, we see  
Vot in it dere be  
Ullo, ullo.

[*Two Stage hands enter.*]  
Is there a basket there?

*S.H.* Yes, sir.

*M.* Bring it here.

α. Now we'll see oo's right.

[*Basket is brought in. It contains miscellaneous uniforms.*]

*Chorus.* But these aren't ours. We've never seen them before.  
Why, they're uniforms. This isn't the war.

*M.* **Vot does this mean?**  
**I am astounded.**

*S.H.* **In 1916**  
**A musical revue, sir.**  
**The Lady of the Guard**  
**Was put on by you, sir**  
**In aid of the wounded.**  
**There was a scene**  
**In the palace yard;**  
**This was worn, I believe, sir**  
**By Miss Annabelle Eve, sir.**

*M.* **Oh, yes, I remember**  
**It began in November.**  
**What was the number**  
**That made such a hit?**

*S.H.* **'Soldiers of the King of Kings'.**

*M.* **Yes, that was it**  
**Conductor, can you play it?**

**Conductor. I must ask my strings—**  
**Yes, sir, we can.**

*M.* **I'll say it.**

**They are ever stepping onward**  
**They are eager with the hope of youth.**  
**They never fear the foe**  
**But strike a gallant blow**  
**For God and the cause of truth.**  
**They are ever stepping homeward**  
**They are looking unto higher ways**  
**Free as the flag that waves overhead**  
**Soldiers of the King of Kings.**

*Chorus.* We are getting so cold,  
These uniforms are old.  
But ours or not  
We'll wear the lot.

*M.* Gut, then every thing ends  
Happily, my friends.  
Now, come along  
And sing this song.  
Are you ready  
Are you steady?

*A.* One moment, sir, the Kellogg pact  
Has outlawed war as a national act.

*Audience.* Scholarships—not battleships.

*α.* This is an attack on the working-class.

*Audience.* One, two, three, four  
The last war was a bosses' war.  
Five, six, seven, eight  
Rise and make a workers' state.  
Nine, ten, eleven, twelve  
Seize the factories and run them yourself.

*β.* It's 'is fault. I told you so.

*Audience* [pointing at Dancer]. Put him out. Put him out.

*Chorus.* You are responsible,  
You are impossible,  
Out you go.  
We will liquidate,  
The capitalist state  
Overthrow.

*Audience.* Atta boys.

*Manager.* Do something, man,  
As quick as you can.  
Prevent such behaviour  
And be our saviour.  
Get us out of this trouble  
As I guarantee  
My theatre will double  
Your salary.

[Dancer dances as the demagogue. The Chorus lose their menacing attitude and become fascinated. Crowd as ♂. Demagogue as ♀.]

*Announcer.* Comrades, I absolutely agree with you. We must have a revolution. But wait a moment. All this talk about class war won't get us anywhere. The circumstances here are quite different from Russia. Russia has no middle class, no tradition of official administrative service. We must have an English revolution suited to English conditions, a revolution not to put one class on top but to abolish class, to ensure not less for some but more for all, a revolution of Englishmen for Englishmen. After all, are we not all of one blood, the blood of King Arthur, and Wayland the Smith? We have Lancelot's courage, Merlin's wisdom. Our first duty is to keep the race pure, and not let these dirty foreigners come in and take our job. Down with the dictatorship of international capital. Away with their filthy books which corrupt our innocent sons and daughters. English justice, English morals, England for the English.

*Chorus.* Perhaps you are right, perhaps you are right.  
You put things in another light.

*Announcer.* The Anglo-Saxon race is in danger. Who will follow him to save it?

*A.* I was a farmer during the war,  
I sold my bacon at two and four,  
If you keep out Denmark, I can do it once more—  
I'll follow thee.

*B.* I was a girl that had nice young men,  
But they've all been going abroad since then  
If you can bring them back again,  
I'll follow thee.

*C.* In the good old days, I was a Black and Tan  
I was always there when the tortures began  
If you give us a whip I'll do what I can,  
I'll follow thee.

*D.* For five years now I've been out of a job,  
I don't care whether you're a Jew or a nob,  
If you will promise to give me a bob,  
I'll follow thee.

*Chorus.* The English revolution

Is the only solution  
We take a resolution  
To follow thee.

*Announcer* [pointing to Manager]. We'll begin here

Look at him there

A dirty Jew

You know what to do. [*They assault and beat him, etc.*]

[*Ship formation*].

*Announcer.* Take your place, take your place,

To save the Anglo-Saxon race,

Follow our gallant captain for ever

Our dandy, our dancer, our deep sea diver.

**Chorus.** The ship of England crosses the ocean  
Her sails are spread, she is beautiful in motion.  
We love her and obey her captain's orders  
We know our mind, no enemy shall board us.

Then hurrah for me and hurrah for you  
Though the decks may heel  
We'll be true as steel  
The captain, the bo'sun, the mate and the boy  
The pretty cabin boy  
Salute, Salute,  
Toot a toot toot,  
Hurrah for the English crew.

We are all of one blood, we are thoroughbred,  
We'll not lose our courage, we'd sooner be dead.  
Like one big family we're all united  
In our hearts burns a fire that has been long lighted.  
Then hurrah, etc.

Let the whirlpools boil as the billows rise higher,  
We'll steer through them all to what we require  
Over monsters deadly in the deep sea sand  
Our keel rides on to the Promised Land.

Then hurrah, etc.

God bless the wind that blows us over  
God bless the will that binds us like a lover.  
God bless our ship that carries us so rightly  
God bless our captain day and nightly.

Then, hurrah, etc.

[*Audience makes a noise like waves.*]

*A.* I'm pretty tough,  
But these waves are rough,  
I'm beginning to feel  
A little ill,  
Let's ask the lookout  
What it's all about  
Hullo, up there—  
Have you anything to declare?

*Announcer.* Storm ahead.

*Audience.* We are the storm. [*Noises.*]

*Chorus.* What shall we do  
To pull us through?

- A.* Furl the sails.
- B.* Jettison the cargo.
- C.* Cast anchor.

  

- A.* This way.
- B.* This way.
- C.* This way.

  

- A.* Hold it like this.
- B.* Hold it like this.
- C.* Hold it like this.

*Announcer.* Lightning and thunder.

*Audience.* We are the lightning. Crash. Fizz.  
We are the thunder. Boom.

- A.* I've got a weak heart  
Oh, why did I ever start ?
- B.* I shall see no more  
The roses round the door.

C. I am an only son.  
O what's to be done?

*Announcer.* Rocks ahead.

*Audience.* We are the rocks. [Noises.]

- A. We shall soon run aground,  
We shall all be drowned.
- B. George, hold me tight,  
I'm in such a fright.
- C. Full steam ahead.
- B. Reverse, man, reverse.
- C. Stop, stop.
- A. Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come.
- C. Mother. Mother.

[Crash.]

*[During the storm the formation gets more and more disintegrated. Dancer gradually works into a whirling movement which culminates in a falling fit.]*

*Chorus.* He's sick,  
A doctor quick.

- A. Hold his legs,  
Put a gag in his mouth.

*Chorus.* A doctor, please.

*Doctor.* [Comes up from Audience.] I'm a doctor,  
Let me examine him.

[Pause.]

*Chorus.* What is it, doctor?

*Doctor.* An epileptic fit. He'll be better soon, but we must get him into bed. I am afraid this will have to be the end of his performance to-night, and for many nights to come.

*Chorus.* Oh, but, doctor, the play—the play. We can't get on without him. What about us? We can't lose our job suddenly like this.

*Doctor.* I'm sorry, but it can't be helped.

[Enter Sir Edward.]

*Sir E.* One moment, doctor.

*Doctor.* Oh, good evening, Sir Edward. I didn't know you were here.

*Sir E.* Can't you really do something for the poor chap? He'll be so disappointed if he can't go on. Incidentally, there's the audience, you know. After all, they've paid for their seats.

*D.* Honestly, Sir Edward, I couldn't. He's in a most critical condition. Any exertion now might be fatal.

*Sir E.* Couldn't you give him an injection or something? I've a friend with me who would be most annoyed if the performance were to come to an end now. I don't know what I shall say to him. You must do something. I know that he'd see that your position was secure if anything unfortunate happens.

*D.* Who is he?

*Sir E.* 'Sh not so loud. (*Whispers in doctor's ear.*) As a matter of fact he is very anxious to meet you. Come and have supper with us when the show's over.

*D.* Very well, but I don't like it. I'll give him an injection [Turning to actors.] Listen. I've decided to let him go on.

*Chorus.* O thank you, doctor.

*D.* But mind. There's to be no excitement of any kind—no politics, for instance, something quite peaceful, something, shall we say, about the country or home life?

*Chorus.* We understand.

*D.* After you, Sir Edward.

*Sir E.* After you doctor.

[*Exeunt to audience.*]

*A.* Very well, fellows, what shall we do?

*a.* Oh, go and drown yourselves.

[*Exit a from the theatre with a great deal of noise.*]

*B.* Be true

To the inner self. Retire to a wood

The will of the blood is the only good

We must learn to know it.

*A.* I see what you mean  
We must keep our primal integrity clean.

*B.* Exactly.

*C.* That's clear.  
What a good idea.

*A.* Be perfectly calm.

*B.* Live on a farm.

*C.* Well out of harm.

*Chorus.* Knowing no sin.

*A.* Only obeying.

*B.* Without delaying.

*C.* The slightest saying.

*Chorus.* Of the voice within.

**A. (To Audience.)** Listen, friends we  
Are a colony  
Equal and free  
Of boys and girls.

[Dancer *shakes his head.*]

**B.** There's something the matter with your dancing friend.  
He's getting excited.

**A.** He doesn't agree  
With something which we  
Have said. What can it be?

**Announcer.** It's about the girls. Man must be the leader whom women must obey. He must go forward into the unknown at dawn, while she waits at home trusting and believing in him, till at night he returns tired, and as such becomes as a little child again. This is her hour. She shall care for and refresh him that he may set out once more in search of the Ideal.

**Chorus.** That leaves no doubt  
We must leave the girls out  
Come on, let's start.

**Girls in C.** This is a shame  
We want a part.

**Men.** You do what we say  
And run away.

**B.** Don't be so tame. You stay where you are.  
Don't you let 'em put that stuff on you.

**Girls.** We're going to play in this show  
Whether you like it or no.  
We won't go.

**A.** [To Announcer.] They refuse to go flat  
What do you say about that?

**Announcer.** Make them into scenery.

**A.** Brilliant. My word  
That never occurred  
To me. [To Girls.] You be a bird,  
You be a tree  
So, crook your knee.  
You be a cow  
So we'll begin now.

**Chorus.** [Both dance.]

Are you living in the city  
Where the traffic won't stop;  
Haggard and anxious  
For life's a flop  
Why not stop?

Are you tired of parties  
All that clever talk?  
O boy, have you ever  
Seen a sparrowhawk?  
Learn to walk.

Sailor, that assurance  
You lost at birth  
You can have it, recover  
A sense of worth  
Come back to earth.

Gay girl to whom petting  
Matters so much  
Poor kid, the reason's  
You're out of touch  
With flowers and such.

Revolutionary worker  
I get what you mean.  
But what you're needing  
S' a revolution within  
So let's begin.

Banker, boxer, burglar,  
Hostess and girl gone wrong  
We've got you beat to a frazzle  
This is where you belong  
Hear our song.

How happy are we  
In our country colony  
We play games  
We call each other by our christian names  
Sitting by streams  
We have sweet dreams  
You can take it as true  
That Voltaire knew  
We cultivate our gardens when we're feeling blue  
Lying close to the soil  
Our hearts strike oil  
We live day and night  
In the inner light  
We contemplate our navels till we've second sight  
Gosh, it's all right  
In our country colony.

[*Towards the end of the dance A gets out of time.*]

*Several of the Audience.* Clumsy, can't you count? You are  
spoiling the dance.

*Chorus.* [*Whispering to A.*] One, two, three, four.

*A. [Breaking off and coming forward.]*

I won't dance any more  
You are mistaken  
About the path you have taken  
What you desire  
Is no earthly fire  
You won't find the truth  
In a beautiful youth  
Nor will it be found  
In tilling the ground  
For the Eternal Word  
Has no habitation  
In beast or bird  
In sea or stone  
Nor in the circumstances  
Of country dances  
It abideth alone.  
He who would prove  
The Primal love  
Must leave behind  
All love of his kind  
And fly alone  
To the Alone.

*Chorus.* We don't understand.

*Women. [Ceasing to be scenery.]*

We do, and he's right  
You were fooled all right  
You thought you were escaping from sin  
By leaving us out but you left yourselves in.

*Chorus.* This is something new  
We don't know what to do

This doctrine is at variance  
With all our past experience  
You may perhaps be right  
About this mystic flight  
Again it may be fiction  
To tell the truth we lack conviction  
It would be best we feel  
If someone would appeal  
To our imagination  
And give a demonstration  
And shew us the technique  
This is what we seek.

Now, who will be our master? Who will be the one  
To teach us how to fly from the alone to the Alone?

[*Pause.*]

[Dancer comes forward while the Announcer is speaking, he should be rubbed down by masseurs and generally got ready.]

*Announcer.* Hullo, everybody. As you all know, the greatest feat, the most stupendous risk in human history is being undertaken this evening by a gentleman who prefers to remain known simply as the Pilot. His ambition is no less than to reach the very heart of Reality.

- γ. I'll bet my boots he can't do it.
- δ. I'll bet my opera hat he can.
- γ. Bet you my car.
- δ. Bet you my wife.
- γ. Bet you my house.
- δ. Bet you my Scotch grouse moor.

*Announcer.* The Pilot desires me—one moment please. The news has just come through that two listeners are betting a pair of boots, a car and a house to an opera hat, a wife and a Scotch grouse moor on the result. As I was saying, the Pilot desires me to thank all those who have been kind enough to send him messages of good luck, knitted scarves, crystallized fruits, killing-bottles, copies of the Outline of Modern Knowledge for Boys and Girls, pamphlets relating to the pyramids, birth-control, a universal language, etc. He regrets that owing to pressure he is unable to answer each correspondent individually, but trusts that they will accept this public acknowledgment. The time is now (*whatever it is*) so we are going over to the ground itself where Mr. Box and Mr. Cox will carry on and give you an eye-witness's account of this unique event.

[*While B and C are speaking, the Audience should render the appropriate noises they describe.*]

- B. I should say it's freezing. What do you think, Cox?
- C. There is a nip in the air, Box.
- B. The crowd are stamping their feet and swinging their arms to keep warm. I hear some of the women have been here since the day before yesterday. There must be fifty thousand people here.
- C. Fifty, Box.
- B. Mr. Cox thinks there are fifty thousand. I'm going to toss him for it. You call, Cox.
- C. Tails.
- B. Tails it is. Very well, then, there are fifty thousand here. It's a beautifully clear starlight night, and they're as

happy as sandboys. Away to the right a member of the Green Cheese Society is making a spirited speech. David Johnstone, the six year old marvel, is thrilling a portion of the monster audience by the instantaneous conversion of logarithms into improper fractions. There are a lot of distinguished people here. [*Mentions any there may be in the audience.*] I say, Cox, can you make out with your glasses what's going on on the left?

- C. It looks as though they had caught a pickpocket. Yes ugh, don't look, they're breaking his back against the railings.
- B. Very regrettable. [*Cheers.*] Ah, can you hear that? What is it, Cox? Wait a moment. Yes, it is. Here he comes. Splendid fellow. I think he's looking a bit pale. You carry on, Cox; you've got field glasses and see more detail.
- C. He's coming into the enclosure. The crowd are frantic. The police are holding them. They're giving way. Hold them. Well done. The police are marvellous. Now he's acknowledging the cheers of the crowd. Someone at back mentioned Jules Verne. No one answered him.
- B. How would you like to be going with them, Cox?
- C. I think I'd rather stay where I am.
- B. Perhaps you're right. But still it does make one feel young again. Do you remember how we cheered you when you did that run through in the Ampleforth match and scored as the whistle went?
- C. A fluke, Box. He's getting ready. One, two, three. He's off.

[*Dance begins.*]

- C. The crowd are holding their breath. Marvellous. Did you see that turn? He's doing it. I'm afraid that listener will lose his boots. He's well away now. What did I say, Box?
- B. Yes, I admit you read him right. Hullo, look, what's the matter?
- C. What is it? He's waving. Something's up. He's righting himself. No, he isn't. O God, he's fallen.

[Dancer falls and staggers up being paralysed from the feet up.]

*Chorus.* Get him into a chair  
And give him some air  
If we only knew  
What we could do  
Does anyone know  
Where we can go?

[Enter Manager.]

*Manager.* Gut evening friends. The last time we met  
Ve had a leetle quarrel. But let's forget  
No? Now leesen, I have given op  
My theatre beesness and opened a clob  
A cosy little night-clob just like home.

[As he is talking the stage-hands bring in a dumb-waiter with drinks and set the stage. Manager produces a card with *Alma Mater* written on it and hangs it up.]

*M.* I hev called it the *Alma Mater* just to remind you  
Of the beautiful English times you leave behind you  
Beautiful food, lovely wines. Now won't you come?

*Announcer.* Who is ugly  
Who is sick

Who is lonely  
Come on quick  
Hither.

[*The audience begin to come up on to the stage.*]

- γ. Hopeless at games, despising self in room not knocked at black hat well down, I come for secret triumph, cause for smiling when others turn away. I come for you.
- δ. Hating a village spire, my simple people's answer, prospect of everlasting rain on half-ploughed fields. I come for expensive shoes to take applause from tables. I come for you.
- γ. How goes it then?
- δ. It goes me well.
- γ. Comest thou with?
- δ. Self-understandingly I come.
- ε. The dark one there now; is she free?
- ξ. I find it.
- ε. She is possible for me.

[*Going up to her.*] Smokest thou?

- ξ. I am so free.

[*The dancer is wheeled forward.*]

*Announcer.* Make way. Make way. He's living still,  
But remember he is very ill,  
But wheel further away from the wall,  
So he can see better. It is his last time of all.

*A.* [*His attendant.*] Oh, don't say that, sir.  
He'll soon be about.

*Announcer.* He thanks you for your words, but there's no  
doubt

Fetch him a half—

*A.* Do you think he better?

*Announcer.* Very well then, he'll have a whole litre.

*B.* Day, my sir.

*C.* Day, my sir. How goes it thee?

*D.* Thou seest dreadful out—

Thou hast thyself too well amused, not true?

No, swindle not.

*B.* Hast a cigarette for me?

*A.* [Distributing cigarettes for dancer by throwing them from a box.] Catch.

*B.* I thank.

*A.* Thee also.

*C.* I thank.

*D.* Forget me not, my sire, I thank.

*Announcer.* Fetch him some pen and paper and write  
He is going to make his will to-night.

[Tune, *Casey Jones.*]

He leaves his body, he leaves his wife

He leaves the years, he leaves the life

For the power and the glory of his kingdom they must  
pass.

To work their will among the working class.

*Chorus.* The Greeks were balanced, their art was great

They thought out in detail the city state

But a gap to the interior was found at Carcassonne

So trade moved westward and they were gone.

*Announcer.* He leaves you his horses the light and the dark  
He leaves the oaks in the long deer park  
He leaves you his meadows, his harvests and his heath  
With the coal and the minerals that lie underneath.

*Chorus.* The Romans as every schoolboy knows  
United an empire with their roman nose  
But they caught malaria and they couldn't keep ac-  
counts  
And barbarians conquered them who couldn't pronounce.

*Announcer.* He leaves you his engines and his machines  
The sum of all his productive means.  
He leaves you his railways, his liners and his banks  
And he leaves you his money to spend with thanks.

*Chorus.* The feudal barons they did their part  
Their virtues were not of the head but the heart.  
Their ways were suited to an agricultural land  
But lending on interest they did not understand.

*Announcer.* To the medical student who came in tight  
That chandelier there to sleep with to-night.  
And then to that lady who ought never to have come  
A tip for the attendant and a taxi home.

*Chorus.* Luther and Calvin put in a word  
The god of your priests, they said, is absurd.  
His laws are inscrutable and depend upon grace  
So laissez-faire please for the chosen race.

*Chorus.* The bourgeois thought this splendid advice  
They cut off the head of their king in a trice  
They enclosed the common lands and laid them for  
sheep  
And the peasants were told they could play bo-peep.

*Announcer.* And last he would like to congratulate  
The actors, orchestra and authors to-night  
Upon this performance and as soon as it is done  
Many engagements be offered them by everyone.

*Chorus.* They invited them into a squalid town  
They put them in factories and did them down  
Then they ruined each other for they didn't know how  
They were making the conditions that are killing them  
now.

*Announcer.* He asks for free drinks for the company here.  
To make their lives not so hard to bear  
So drink to his funeral in claret and beer  
For he wishes you all a very happy new year.

[Clock strikes 12.]

*Chorus.* New Year. New Year. We have thirst.

*Announcer.* Send round the boot, waiter.

*Waiter.* So direct, my sir.

- B.* He's sending me the boot.
- A.* He's not mean. He's goot.
- D.* Pass it.
- C.* Pass it.
- B.* New Year. Now, altogether.

*Chorus.* Hail the strange electric writing  
Alma Mater on the door  
Like a secret sign inviting  
All the rich to meet the poor  
Alma Mater, ave salve  
Floreas in secula

*Girls.* You sent us men with lots of money,  
You sent us men you knew were clean,  
You sent us men as sweet as honey,  
With whom we could be really keen.  
Always even though we marry  
Though we wear ancestral pearls  
One memory we'll always carry  
We were Alma Mater girls.

*Chorus.* Alma mater, ave salve, etc.

*Thieves.* Let Americans with purses  
Go for short strolls after dark,  
Let the absent-minded nurses  
Leave an heiress in the park,  
Though the bullers sooner or later  
Clap us handcuffed into jail,  
We will remember Alma Mater,  
We will remember without fail.  
Chorus.

*Boys.* The French are mean and Germans lazy,  
Dutchmen will leave you in the end.  
Only the Englishman though he's crazy,  
He will keep you for a friend.  
Although always a king in cotton  
Waft us to foreign parts  
Alma Mater shall not be forgotten,  
She is written on our hearts.  
Chorus.

*Blackmailers.* We must thank our mugs' relations,  
For our income and man's laws.  
But the first congratulations  
Alma Mater they are yours.

**Coiners.** When the fool believes our story  
When he thinks our coins are true  
To Alma Mater be the glory  
For she taught us what to do.  
Chorus.

**Old Hacks and Trots.**

We cannot dance upon the table  
Now we're old as souvenirs  
Yet as long as we are able  
We will remember bygone years  
Still as when we were the attraction  
Come the people from abroad,  
Spending though we're out of action,  
More than they can well afford.  
Chorus.

**Grand Chorus.**

Navies rust and nations perish  
Currency is never sure  
But Alma Mater she shall flourish  
While the sexes shall endure  
Alma Mater, ave salve  
Floreas in secula.

**A.** Some brandy quick  
He's sick.

**Announcer.** He's dead.

[*Pause.*]

[*Noise without.*]

Quick under the table, it's the 'tees and their narks,  
O no, salute—it's Mr. Karl Marx.

*Chorus. (Singing to Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March'.)*

O Mr. Marx, you've gathered  
All the material facts  
You know the economic  
Reasons for our acts.

[*Enter Karl Marx with two young communists.*]

**K.M.** The instruments of production have been too much for  
him. He is liquidated.

[*Exeunt to a Dead March.*]

THE END









